

FOREST VALUES AND HOW TO SUSTAIN THEM

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The forestry profession has the responsibility of managing forests for all of their values. In the past, this has usually not been done. Often, timber has been the only value considered. The emphasis has not been on practices that combine other values with timber production. Such forestry practices must consider forest types and conditions, site quality and characteristics, and the long time needs of the people. This will require a broad concept of economics and based on all values. These would include watershed protection, erosion control, recreation, aesthetics, wildlife habitat, wilderness management, and the survival of Earth as a home for humanity.

First, we need more foresters in the woods who understand the art and science of ecological management. This usually emulates nature but often on a different time scale. Most values can be obtained together in the same forest at the same time. We must also know the objectives and slant the actions toward them, but not at the expense of the natural ecological requirements of the forest involved. We must use a workable value system, not just "dollar economics".

Except for badly damaged and decadent forests, this means some form of selection harvest and improvement cutting. It requires practices to obtain new regeneration, such as knowledge of opening size to make, tree classes, stand structure and maturity guides are required for optimum residual stands. In the Central Hardwoods, the ecological method for high total values is group selection, not patch cutting or clearcutting.

A total of 42 references based on a 20-year compartment study on Kaskaskia Experimental Forest in Hardin County, Illinois, are given as the chief foundation of this article.

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